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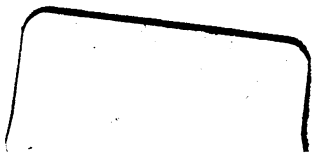

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Fielding

A

PLAN

FOR PREVENTING

ROBBERIES

WITHIN

TWENTY MILES of LONDON.

[Price Sixpence.]

A

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FOR PREVENTING

ROBBERIES

WITHIN

TWENTY MILES of LONDON.

WITH

An ACCOUNT of the Riſe and Eſtabliſhment of the real THIEFTAKERS.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

Advice to PAWNBROKERS, STABLE-KEEPERS, and PUBLICANS.

By JOHN FIELDING, Eſq;

LONDON,
Printed for A. MILLAR, in the Strand.
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ASTOR, LENOX AND
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To the PUBLIC.

THE perjuries of McDaniel and his crew having raiſed a ſtrong prepoſſeſſion againſt thieftakers in general, it ſeems proper at this time to publiſh a few facts, relating to the real and uſeful thieftakers, whereby the public may be enabled to diſtinguiſh between thoſe who deſerve to be conſidered with regard and eſteem, and thoſe who are moſt juſtly the objects of contempt and indignation. As this is one of the principal ends of the following narrative, with which the plan I have propoſed for preventing robberies within twenty miles of London is naturally connected, and on which, indeed, the

the ſucceſs thereof depends; I doubt not but it will be received with candour by that public, whoſe true intereſt will ever be the conſtant view of,

Their moſt faithful humble Servant,

JOHN FIELDING.

INTRODUCTION.

AS the method which I here intend to lay before the public, in order to prevent highway robberies within twenty miles of London, is founded on the ſame principles with that made uſe of in town, viz. quick notice and ſudden purſuit; and as both will generally be executed by the ſame inſtruments, namely, the real thieftakers; it will, I apprehend, be neceſſary to give ſome account of their eſtabliſhment, and of the means by which they were reduced to a regular body.

The winter after the late Henry Fielding Eſq; came to Bow-Street, the town was infeſted by a daring gang of robbers, who attacked ſeveral perſons of faſhion, and gave a general alarm through the City and the liberty of Weſtminſter; and as that magiſtrate then enjoyed a good ſhare of health, he ſpirited up the civil power, and ſent ſeveral bodies of conſtables, with the advantage of having Mr. Welch at their head, into different parts of the town, by whoſe bravery and activity thoſe diſturbers of the peace were quickly apprehended and brought to juſtice: and though, the year after, moſt of theſe conſtables were out of office, yet ſome of them, being actuated by a truly public ſpirit

againſt thieves, and being encouraged by the ſaid magiſtrate, continued their diligence, and were always ready, on being ſummoned, to go in purſuit of villains. The next winter furniſhed them with ſufficient occaſions to try their courage; when Mr. William Pentlow and Mr. Peele, then conſtables, particularly diſtinguiſhed themſelves, having taken one Lewis in a very remarkable manner, by whoſe information the whole gang was apprehended. The keeper of New Priſon dying ſoon after, the juſtices, as a reward for Mr. Pentlow's public ſervices, gave him that place, which he has now enjoyed four years, and in that time has brought ſeveral villains to juſtice, and ſtill continues to act with ſuch vigilance, that no longer ago than laſt ſeſſions, he was honoured with the thanks of the juſtices at Hicks's-Hall, for his bravery in attacking, aſſiſted by Mr. Gee a conſtable, the notorious Burk and Gill, even though Mr. Pentlow and Gee were unarmed, and Burk and Gill had each a piſtol in his hand, one of which was fired in Mr. Gee's face.

This encouragement of merit induced ſeveral conſtables and other perſons to ſerve the public in the ſame way: and as ſoon as Mr. Fielding was enabled by the government to put his plan in execution, whatever conſtables appeared willing to go on theſe hazardous enterprizes, were occaſionally employed,

ployed, together with a ſet of brave fellows, who had before entered the liſt; to whoſe ſervices the public is much indebted. All of theſe had ſerved the office of conſtable, except one, a Marſhalſea-court officer, and conſequently uſed to the apprehending of common debtors, who are generally of the deſperate kind; ſo that the real thieftakers muſt all have been houſekeepers, and reputable ones too, otherwiſe they could not have been nominated to ſerve the office of conſtable in their reſpective pariſhes: and as often as the year comes round, and they are diſcharged from their offices, ſome of the braveſt of them generally enter the other liſt, and are ready on all occaſions to obey the directions of the acting magiſtrate.

Now when it is conſidered, that by this means the acting magiſtrate, beſides having the whole civil power within his juriſdiction at command, can every day, upon notice given of any robbery, outrage, or other violence committed, call together a number of ſuch brave and reputable men, always ready to purſue and attack the moſt daring villain, a real thieftaker muſt be eſteemed a valuable ſervant of the ſociety. Let us only look back on that terrible Iriſh gang, conſiſting of thirteen perſons, which infeſted the town about the time that Lord Harrington's cook was murdered, and recollect that all theſe villains were brought to juſtice by the real

thieftakers, all perſons who had ſerved the office of conſtable: that the great Mr. Parry, who had ſtruck terror into all the ſquares about St. James's, fell a victim to the reſolution of theſe men, as did ſeveral other ſtreet-robbers afterwards; and laſtly, Walſh, Armſtrong, Courtney, and the two deſperadoes Gill and Burk: that the perſons who ſhot at and wounded Colonel Schutz, were taken by a pickt party of conſtables, who ſeized the bold Mr. Fleming, and ſeveral others for the highway.

This, therefore, may ſerve to ſhew, that ſo long as the ſpirit of the civil power is preſerved by proper encouragements, the public will never want ſuch thieftakers as one would wiſh ſhould be employed; and though now and then a ſingle ſtreet-robber or houſe-breaker may be ſucceſsful, yet it will be always impoſſible for a number of them to form themſelves into a gang.

Indeed, it was the advantages received by theſe perſons, as the juſt rewards of their diligence, that tempted M.Daniel and his helliſh crew, to proſtitute the uſeful employment of a thieftaker, to the procuring both public and private rewards, at the ſhameful and ſhocking price of innocent blood.

And that the ſubſcriptions, raiſed by the gentlemen about London to prevent robberies,

beries, added to this temptation, is clear from the ſcheme practiſed in relation to the ſham robbery committed on Salmon at Blackheath.

To remove this temptation, by altering the nature of the ſubſcriptions, is the intention of the following propoſal.

But before I open it, as I have mentioned McDaniel and his gang, I take the liberty to aſſure the world that neither he, Berry, Salmon, Egan or Blee, were ever to my knowledge employed by my late brother, or myſelf, in any ſhape whatever; nay, ſo far from it, that I remember this very McDaniel came ſome years ago wounded to my brother, and ſwore he had been robbed and ſhot at by two perſons whom he produced; and though he ſwore poſitively to them and the fact, yet that magiſtrate conceived ſo ill an opinion of the proſecutor in the courſe of his examination, that the priſoners, though charged with a capital offence, were both admitted to bail, to the great ſatisfaction of his grace the late duke of Richmond, and ſeveral gentlemen then preſent, and were afterwards acquitted at the Old Bailey.

Another circumſtance that may ſerve to ſhew the very bad opinion which Mr. Field-

ing had conceived of theſe people was, that this very Blee, who was evidence againſt McDaniel and the reſt, came to Mr. Fielding, ſoon after His Majeſty's proclamation of an hundred pounds for the apprehending of ſtreet-robbers was publiſhed, and offered to make an information, nay, brought an information drawn up, in which it was ſet forth, that McDaniel and others had obtained two hundred and eighty pounds, as rewards for hanging two innocent men; and the reaſon he gave for making this information was, "that they had uſed him ill:" but Mr. Fielding had ſo very bad an opinion of Blee and his accomplices, that he ordered the former to be turned out of his houſe, and would have nothing to do with the latter. But when he laid his plan to prevent robberies before the right honourable the Privy Council, he gave the wickedneſs of this particular ſet of men as a reaſon againſt the publiſhing any future rewards, by way of proclamation, for the apprehending of thieves, in order to take away from theſe wretches their only temptation to perjury and murder. Indeed it was owing to this repreſentation, that theſe kind of rewards have not been publiſhed ſince, except in one inſtance only.

Having thus ſhewn the cauſe and means of forming a regular body of real and honeſt thief-

thieftakers, I proceed to a ſcheme naturally connected therewith, and dependant upon it, namely,

A

PLAN

FOR PREVENTING

ROBBERIES

Within TWENTY MILES of LONDON.

THAT there are more highway robberies committed in one year within twenty miles of London, than in any other part of the kingdom, or perhaps in the whole kingdom beſides, will, I believe, be allowed; and that not one in a hundred of theſe robbers are taken in the fact, is no leſs aſtoniſhing than true; eſpecially when we conſider that, within this diſtance from London, there is ſcarce a mile without a town or village, and that there are always numbers of people paſſing and repaſſing on theſe public roads. Were there any poſſibility of theſe pages living longer than an advertiſement, I am afraid I ſhould hardly be believed

lieved in the following true ſtory; but, luckily for me, the chief actor in the ſcene is now alive. A captain of the guards was ſometime ago robbed on Hounſlow Heath in a poſt-chaiſe, and the moment the highwayman left him, diſengaged one of the horſes, and purſued the robber; and who will believe it? though he drove him through a public town at noon-day, crying out highwayman! highwayman! both being in full view of the populace, yet no one join'd the purſuit, more than if all the inhabitants had been intereſted in the highwayman's eſcape. That theſe kind of robberies have been very frequent, and very diſagreeable to the gentlemen who live at a ſmall diſtance from town, will appear from the pains they have taken, and the many ſubſcriptions they have ſet on foot, to cauſe theſe highwaymen to be apprehended; but, very unluckily, ſuch ſubſcriptions, inſtead of being an encouragement to honeſt men, of bold and daring ſpirits, to purſue, attack, and apprehend robbers, have been a temptation to a body of villains, who diſgrace human nature, to contrive robberies, and to make robbers, in order to deſtroy the latter for the ſake of the reward; like their maſter, the devil himſelf, who firſt tempts to ſin, then puniſhes, and laſtly, feaſts on the wickedneſs he has occaſioned.

I be-

I believe, when theſe ſubſcriptions were firſt propoſed, it was not thought there were men capable of converting them to ſuch abominably ſhameful and horrid purpoſes: but as that is become an evil which was intended as a remedy, and the remedy is grown worſe than the diſeaſe, I have taken the liberty to offer a ſmall alteration in theſe ſubſcriptions, which would, I apprehend, make them fully anſwer the end propoſed, and put them out of the reach of abuſe.

But it may perhaps be thought proper previouſly to eſtabliſh the following facts, *viz.* 1ſt, That thoſe perſons who rob upon the highway, within twenty miles of London, ſet out from thence for that purpoſe; 2dly, That they ride hired horſes; 3dly, That they retire thither for ſhelter; 4thly, That they are generally taken in town; and laſtly, that there is a plan fixt in town, and ſupported by the government, for the apprehending of robbers; in which, if the public do but perform their part, by giving immediate notice of any robbery to that magiſtrate, who, from experience of its uſe, daily ſolicits it by a ſtanding advertiſement, it muſt be impoſſible for villains ever to eſcape juſtice long. The public are deſired once more to take notice, that thoſe perſons who are entruſted with the execution of this plan,

and are commonly ſtiled thieftakers, are all of them houſekeepers, men of tried courage, pickt from among the peace-officers; and moreover, that the moment any one of them commits an act either of cruelty or injuſtice, he is immediately diſcharged by the magiſtrate from the office of thieftaker, and never admitted again.

There are two circumſtances relating to theſe perſons, equally deſerving of attention, as they render them the propereſt people in the world for the purpoſe, viz. 1ſt, As they have been conſtables before they were thieftakers, and have been called upon by the magiſtrates to ſearch houſes of bad fame, and take up idle and diſorderly perſons, they are by that means become acquainted with the bad part of the populace, and their houſes of reſort: in a word, every man that ſeems to dreſs above his circumſtances, that occaſionally mixes in alehouſes, and whoſe way of living is not known, never miſſes being inquired after by the perſons abovementioned. The fate of Fleming, the late highwayman, who was ſuppoſed to have ſubſiſted three or four years by the road, is a proof of the truth of this obſervation; for it was a deſcription of his way of life, told as matter of converſation to Mr. Pentlow, keeper of New Priſon, that was the occaſion of his being apprehended. 2dly, As magiſtrates

are

are often obliged to admit a robber as an evidence, in order to apprehend the gang, who, after the conviction of his confederates, is conſtantly diſcharged, and as conſtantly returns to his former courſes; ſuch an evidence, I ſay, being firſt apprehended either by the conſtable or thieftaker, is conſequently well known to them, and their eye is always upon him, expecting, as it generally happens, that by the next ſeſſions after the execution of his comrades, he will become the captain of a gang of his own raiſing. Indeed, after a man has appeared at the Old Bailey as an evidence, he does not, when he is diſcharged, find a very eaſy admiſſion among the induſtrious part of ſociety; and the motive of his turning evidence being rather the fear of death than remorſe for his guilt, there is very little hope of his reformation under the circumſtances abovementioned. To this may be added, that commonly the greateſt rogue in the gang turns evidence. Is it not a pity then, that there is not ſome proviſion made for theſe outcaſts, in order to prevent their doing farther miſchief themſelves, after they have ſerved the public by diſcovering other criminals? I am of opinion that if, inſtead of being pardoned, they were to be tranſported for a certain term, to break them of their haunts, and to inure them to a life of labour; nay, if they were to be ſent abroad

for life, it would be an equal, if not a greater inducement to them to impeach their accomplices.

Now as to the plan which I have to propoſe:

Let any number of gentlemen, for inſtance twenty, whoſe country houſes are ſituated at different diſtances, from five to twenty miles from London, ſubſcribe two guineas each, which makes the ſum of forty guineas, to be lodged in the hands of one of the ſubſcribers, whom they ſhall appoint treaſurer. Let this money be ſubject to the draughts of all the ſubſcribers, as they ſhall ſeverally have occaſion to employ it; and if any highway robbery be committed in the neighbourhood of any of theſe ſubſcribers, let the firſt that hears of it obtain an exact deſcription of the robber, his horſe, (if he had one) and whatever is taken from the perſon robbed: this let him put in writing, always adding, if poſſible, the name and place of abode of the party robbed; for it ſometimes happens, when a highwayman is apprehended, that the proſecutor not being to be found, the former eſcapes juſtice, and is let looſe again upon the public. Next let a man and horſe be immediately hired, and diſpatched to Mr. Fielding, in Bow-Street, Covent-Garden, with full authority to that gen-

gentleman to advertiſe the ſame in what manner he thinks proper, and to receive of the treaſurer of the ſubſcription the expence of the advertiſements. Mean time let the meſſenger communicate to all the bye ale-houſes, public inns, and turnpikes in his way to and from London, the ſaid robbery, with a verbal deſcription of the man and horſe: the more ſuddenly and quickly this notice is given, the ſurer is the ſucceſs. On the meſſenger's returning to the ſubſcriber who ſent him, and producing a teſtimony from the juſtice of his having delivered to him the ſaid deſcription, and ſetting forth the hour of his arrival in town, the ſubſcriber ſhall give the meſſenger a draught upon the treaſurer for ſuch a ſum of money, as he ſhall think his time, trouble, diligence, and expedition deſerve: and on ſuch occaſions honeſt men will always be found ready enough, on being paid for their trouble, without any other reward, to go on ſuch a meſſage, though, perhaps, they would not chuſe to run any hazard of their perſons by attacking a rogue in deſperate circumſtances. Nay, it has often happened to my brother and myſelf, that by beſtowing a ſhilling or half a crown on a meſſenger, without which he would not have ſtirred one ſtep, more ſervice has been done to the public, than has accrued from advertiſing rewards of an hundred pounds; but

but when notice is given immediately, the expences on the firſt inſtance are trifling; and the meſſenger, the informer, and apprehender are three different perſons, all equally uſeful, but the two firſt are the cheapeſt, becauſe the leaſt dangerous offices. And if any ſubſcriber ſhould hear that highwaymen, houſebreakers, or any other ſpecies of robbers, lie lurking in his neighbourhood, let him hire a ſufficient number of perſons to purſue and apprehend him or them, and pay them by draughts on the treaſurer as before: but this, perhaps, in the country he might find ſome difficulty to do.

There is one thing that would, in ſome reſpect, make this plan perfect, and in which a very large body of men in this metropolis might render themſelves very uſeful to ſociety; I mean the pawnbrokers, alehouſe-keepers, and ſtable-keepers who let horſes to hire. There is, indeed, no authority to oblige theſe perſons to perform their parts; yet I ſhould imagine, that when they come to conſider that their own reputation, or, what is ſtill of more weight, their intereſt, is highly concerned in their being active in this ſcheme, they would do the ſame things for their particular benefit, which the law requires every individual to do for the good of the whole. There is nothing

thing more true than that theſe perſons, nay, indeed, all perſons, act with a view to their own intereſt, and that their differing in opinion ariſes from their miſtaking, not neglecting, that intereſt. Firſt, as to pawnbrokers, it would be needleſs to mention the inconveniencies they ſuffer from taking in ſtolen goods; and I am ſure it would be unneceſſary to tell them, that when a ſhoeblack brings a diamond ring to pawn, there is great reaſon to ſuſpect he did not come honeſtly by it. I ſhall therefore confine myſelf to that part of their conduct, in which they are ſuppoſed to be leaſt on their guard, in order to remedy an error they frequently fall into, from the fear of having actions brought againſt them. With reſpect to this, I would have every pawnbroker know, that wherever there is ſufficient cauſe to ſtop goods on ſuſpicion of their being ſtolen, the very ſame cauſe will juſtify their ſtopping the party, and carrying him before a juſtice; and that the latter without the former, is not only uſeleſs, but unwarrantable; and I ſhould ever adviſe this practice in pawnbrokers, 'till any one ſhews me he has ſuffered by it. But, as the remedy of one evil often begets another, ſo has it happened in this caſe; for ſome pawnbrokers having lately ſtopt ſeveral watches that had been taken by ſtreet-robbers, and on the highway, this has taught the thieves to be more cun-

ning, and to ſell their watches and other goods to wandering Jews, who, to do them juſtice, will buy any thing they can get a penny by, though they ſaw it ſtolen but the very moment before. The late ſtreet-robbers generally left their watches at alehouſes for their reckoning, and when once they were pledged there, they were obliged to eat and drink them out. To the alehouſe-keepers, therefore, I would ſpeak one word, as the good government of the common people depends greatly on the regulation of their houſes: and indeed I wonder, that as keeping an alehouſe is not only a reputable, but an advantageous buſineſs, ſome of them are not more cautious in preſerving that order and good conduct which is the condition of their licences: above all, I would have them to avoid taking in pledges for drink; for if a man wants to raiſe money on any part of his property, let him go to a pawnbroker, whoſe experience acquired in trade teaches him to know whether that is likely to be the man's property or not. It is likewiſe a dangerous thing for publicans to appear, in order to give characters at the Old Bailey of men who ſtand indicted for capital offences, merely becauſe they uſed their houſes. In a word, as it muſt ever be the intereſt of alehouſe-keepers to detect rogues of all kinds, I hope their beſt endeavours to do it will never be wanting, and that whenever

ever they are ſent for on ſuch occaſions by magiſtrates, they will always attend with chearfulneſs, and not put them to the diſagreeable neceſſity of uſing harſher means than a meſſenger. Laſtly, as to ſtable-keepers, and thoſe who let horſes to hire, I dare ſay they know that when a highwayman is taken upon their horſe, ſuch horſe is forfeited to the captor; whoever, therefore, lets a horſe to a ſtranger, hazards the loſing that horſe for the ſake of getting five ſhillings. Morcover, I will tell them a ſecret, which ſome of them don't know, viz. the three highwaymen laſt brought before me kept their horſes out ſeveral days, though they came themſelves to London every night, put up their horſes, and lay themſelves at an inn ſome diſtance from the owner's houſe. Now if a highwayman were taken in this ſituation, the horſe would be forfeited, as much as if he had been apprehended on the road; and it would be a very good caution to a ſtable-keeper never to let a horſe to a man whom he does not know, unleſs he comes recommended by ſome perſon of reputation, whom he does know; and upon all occaſions to book the name of the hirer, the road and diſtance he is going, the day of the month he ſets out, with the colour and marks of the horſe he rides; and if a ſtranger offers more than a common

price, there is the more reaſon to ſuſpect his purpoſe.

Now the peculiar uſe that I would make of theſe three bodies of men, is as follows. It is I ſuppoſe pretty generally known, that there is a daily paper called THE PUBLIC ADVERTISER, fixt for the advertiſing of robberies of all kinds: in that paper, therefore, alehouſe-keepers will ſee the deſcriptions of the perſons of all highwaymen; there, likewiſe, ſtable-keepers will ſee the exact deſcription of highwaymen's horſes, and of thoſe horſes alſo that are ſtolen; and pawnbrokers will there find an exact account of goods in general that are taken on the highway, and otherways ſtolen. If therefore theſe three ſets of people would conſtantly take in and read this paper, the firſt would never harbour a rogue without his knowledge; the ſecond would never furniſh a highwayman with a horſe, without knowing it time enough to detect him, and ſave the horſe; and as to the latter, they have already found ſo many advantages from this paper, as to need no other recommendation of it.

Having nothing more to add to this plan, (if ſo plain and trifling a thing deſerves that name) I think it would not be altogether un-

unneceſſary to conſider the objections that may be brought againſt it; for objections there certainly are, which, if I do not diſcover myſelf, will, I am perſuaded, be ſoon pointed out by the ingenious criticks of this very critical age, at whoſe tremendous bar I now preſume to appear: but in order to ſave my judges ſome trouble, I will make a ſpecies of confeſſion, and by turning commentator on my own works, rob them of the opportunity of abuſing the public's

Moſt faithful,

And obedient humble Servant,

John Fielding.

A few Criticiſms on the above Plan.

FIRST CRITIC.

THIS I think might as well have been called any thing elſe as a plan. Indeed when I read Mr. Fielding's advertiſement, I muſt confeſs I expected to ſee ſome ingenious performance; but *parturiunt montes*, may very juſtly be applied here, for this is the ſimpleſt and moſt trifling thing I ever ſaw.

CULPRIT.

The more it partakes of ſimplicity, the eaſier I apprehend it will be executed; and the more trifling it is, *i. e.* the leſs there is to do, there will be the more probability of its being done, and the expence of its execution will be ſo much the leſs. If therefore it ſhould anſwer the purpoſe as well near London, as it does in town, and in all probability it will do ſo, for the ſame cauſes are very apt to produce the ſame effects, then will this firſt critic be miſtaken.

SECOND CRITIC.

Methinks I hear Mr. McDaniel ſay, that this muſt be a damn'd plan indeed, ſeeing it offers no reward.

CUL-

CULPRIT.

Then it offers no temptation for perjury.

THIRD CRITIC.

I ſuppoſe the author's intereſt is much concerned in the ſucceſs of the PUBLIC ADVERTISER, otherwiſe he would not recommend it ſo ſtrongly.

CULPRIT.

The author has no ſhare in that paper, though his brother had: but the true reaſons for his pointing out this paper, are, 1ſt, Becauſe many of the pawnbrokers, and a great number of alehouſe-keepers originally agreed to take it in; 2dly, Becauſe it is pretty well known to be the paper in which robberies in general, and moſt ſtolen goods, are advertiſed; and laſtly, becauſe the managers of this paper conſtantly preſerve a vacancy to the laſt hour, in order to inſert any occurrence of public utility, and never refuſe any advertiſement of robberies that I ſend, whether long or ſhort; but rather leave out a trifling particular advertiſement, than run the hazard of ſtopping the progreſs of public juſtice. On the other hand, I muſt declare that I have frequently had advertiſements refuſed, and others delayed, by the proprietors of another

ther Advertiſer, though I have carried them myſelf, and aſſured them of the neceſſity of ſuch and ſuch circumſtances being immediately made public. However, I muſt deſire that if any advantage either from this paper, or from any of my endeavours to ſerve the public, ſhould accrue to me, none would preſume to be pleaſed at it, but thoſe who think my labour deſerves encouragement.

FOURTH CRITIC.

Would not the raiſing the hue and cry in the country, be a more effectual method of apprehending thieves, as it has the ſanction of authority, than any private ſubſcription whatever?

CULPRIT.

At a greater diſtance from London, I acknowledge it would, and verily believe that if the method of raiſing hue and cry, together with the penalties upon peace-officers for the neglect of this important duty, was made univerſally known, by being publiſhed in a ſhort manner and clear light, once every month in all the evening papers, for a year together, it would make this part of their office as eaſy and familiar to them as any other whatever, and render it abſolutely impoſſible for any villain in the country to

eſcape juſtice; but near London I apprehend it would loſe its effect, not only from the vaſt variety of paſſengers on the road, mounted and dreſſed alike; but if they ſhould not ſucceed before the rogue reaches London, ſeeking him there, by means of the hue and cry, would be fruitleſs indeed. The different effects of a hue and cry near town, and of the notice mentioned in my plan, was the other day proved, much to the advantage of the latter; for a gentleman in Eſſex was, a few weeks ago, robbed by a ſingle highwayman within a mile of his own houſe, and about ten miles from London; upon which he went before a magiſtrate, made an information, and raiſed the hue and cry, in deſpite of which the highwayman lay all night about fourteen miles diſtant on the ſtraight road, and returned to London the next morning the ſame way, without any moleſtation or hindrance whatever: but the gentleman being more active than perſons generally are on ſuch occaſions, ſent out his ſervants, and having procured as exact deſcriptions of him and his horſe, and other circumſtances, as he could, he brought them to Mr. Fielding, and in three hours time a plan was formed from thoſe circumſtances, which made his eſcape impoſſible, and in about eight and forty hours he fell into the trap, and is now in ſafe cuſtody.

FIFTH CRITIC.

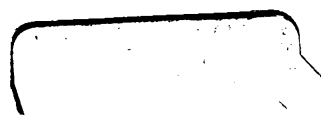
If theſe real thieftakers, as the author is pleaſed to ſtile them, are men of any reputation, why are not their names and places of abode publiſhed, that their characters may be inquired into, and the public not put to the neceſſity of taking the author's bare word for the truth of his own aſſertion?

CULPRIT.

As the thieftakers are extremely obnoxious to the common people, perhaps it might not be altogether politic to point them out to the mob; and the leſs they are known, the better able they will always be to execute the purpoſes of their inſtitution: beſides, as they are annually increaſed by the diſcharge of conſtables, it might deter them from this uſeful office, by injuring them in their reſpective trades; but as one of them lately loſt his life in his duty, *viz.* by taking Burk and Gill, and is conſequently out of the reach of any farther injury, I ſhall not conceal his name, as its being known may, in this generous kingdom, be of ſome ſervice to the two children he has left behind him. His name then was Hind, and his chief employment that of deputy-governor of Tothill-fields Bridewell, where he farmed the tap and labour of that priſon, and carried on a manu-

manufacture of chopping rags for the making of paper, which made that Bridewell of great uſe in employing diſorderly perſons committed thither, and prevented them from ſpending their time in wickedneſs and debauchery, the too common practice of priſoners in other Bridewells in this kingdom. His having the care of a priſon, made him alſo very uſeful in relation to the diſcovering of thieves; for as moſt highwaymen keep company with bad women, who generally ſpend half the year in the Bridewells about town, they have often impeached their paramours; and perſons committed for ſmall offences, have every now and then been the means of deſtroying gangs of houſebreakers, ſhoplifters, and ſtreet-robbers.

Laſtly, If any perſon who is more likely to be an encourager, than the game of a thieftaker, has curioſity to know all their names and places of abode, Mr. Fielding will very readily communicate them, having no intention of concealing any thing that ought, for the good of the public, to be made known.

FINIS.

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